10 COMMON
TESTING
PITFALLS

THE MAIN COMMON TESTING MISTAKES AND THE WAYS TO AVOID THEM

WHAT IS A PITFALL?

"A hidden or unsuspected danger or difficulty"

**Pitfalls are usually hiding in plain sight.
The best way to avoid them is by knowing they exist. Even when you fall into one, there are good and bad ways of getting out of it.**

CLASSIFICATION OF TESTING PITFALLS

Testing related pitfalls can be classified into three main categories:

1. Planning: what's too little or too much?
2. Personal: Mixing emotions and work
3. Project: Taking things for granted Communication & investigation failures

We will cover these pitfalls and present ways to avoid them when possible, and how to overcome them when necessary.

Planning

Personal

Project

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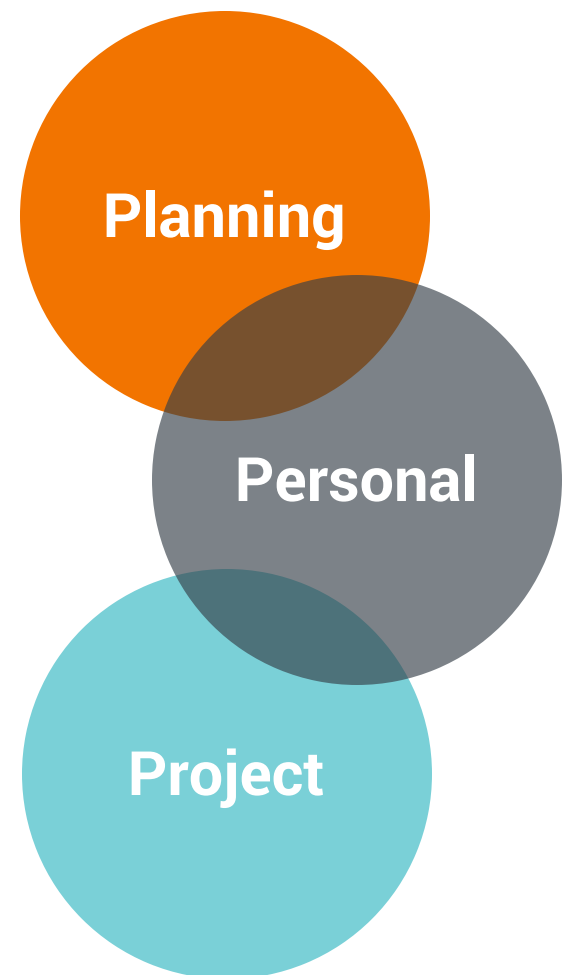
1. BAD OR NO PRIORITIZATION

Do you prioritize your test plan based on importance?
Down the line you will need to make changes and even sacrifices, but some Test Plans lack prioritization altogether…

Idea!

Simple Prioritization:
P1 - What needs to be Fully Tested
P2 - What needs High Level Regression
P3 - What can be Sanitized Only

2. UNDER-PLANNING

When your plan doesn't account for important things like Resources, Delivery Schedules, Training, Materials, etc.

Don't reinvent the wheel!

Look for a template,or brainstorm with your team on what they think is important to plan ahead for- make sure to bring examples.

3. OVER-PLANNING

For example: Your Gantt chart includes every person in your team, on a half-a-day resolution for the next 6 months...

Things will go wrong and even more things will change along the way. Over-planning will make you inflexible.

Don't overplan!

Define High Level plans for the whole project, and Low Level plans for the week or two weeks ahead. Or work Agile :-)

4. NOT ADAPTING TO CHANGES

Your project will change, and not adapting to them will leave you out of sync, and probably out of a job...

How about…

Expect Change & Be Flexible.
Update your High Level plans at least once a week.
When changes happen, communicate the repercussions right away.
Be a team player!

Project Pitfalls

"Everything happening as part of the actual operations, and around the interactions between the players"

1. BAD COMMUNICATION CULTURE

Bad communication will lead to both - Disruption of the Information Flow and to Blame-Game Culture, which in turn is counterproductive.

What can you do?

Be the Responsible Grown-Up in the team and bring the issue up. Explain the benefits of transparency and good communications.

2. IGNORING THE NEEDS OF THE TESTING TEAM

Failing to accommodate for testing constraints, schedule bottlenecks, testability (specially around automation), and more...

Speak Up!

It is not selfishness or being spoiled. Let the rest of the team understand what are the repercussions (with enough time) so that they can make the corrective actions.

3. UNREALISTIC TIMELINES AND "SMALL" CHANGES

Do any these sound familiar?
"You are not a teamplayer!"
"How can it take you twice as long as Development to test it?!?!"
"C'mon! You cannot bring this up every time we need to change something!"

You are a Tester, not a Magician!

Be consistent but not grumpy. You are not the gatekeeper, you should only provide visibility. Explain the alternatives (what you will not test!) and let the team be part of the decision process.

4. LACK OF RESOURCES AND SKILLS

- You need a Load Tester to do Load Testing
- You need a Developer to do Automation
- You need access to devices to test Mobile

It takes time and money to have all the resources you need for a project!

Solution -

Plan this as part of your Test Plan. Bring these points up as soon as possible (before you make your low level plans!) - secure budgets as soon as you can.

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"Many of the most important pitfalls are the ones that come from within ourselves and limit our interactions with the rest of the team players"

1. THE 'FRIENDLY TEAM PLAYER' CONUNDRUM

Do you sometimes feel that:
- You are part of the team and it will hurt my friends if I send this report to higher management?
- I don't want to argue with the developer because later it will be awkward to work with him?
- The bad news need to be shared only "locally" and not spread throughout the organization?

Solution -

Be Fair! If you have bad news you should communicate it as quickly as possible and allow for comments, but then (and very quickly) pass this information along to all the team, this is your job!
Communicate both good and bad news in the same manner,

2. EMOTIONAL TESTING

Our mood and approach influences everything we do, including the tests we run.
- Developers are not your enemies!
- Feedback, comments and rejections should never be personal!

Solution -

Ignore who wrote a feature or who are reporting the bug to. You cannot be soft to some and strict to others, this means you need to be strict with all of them.

You need to do your job so that others can do theirs, but remember to smile while you are at it.

Personal Pitfalls

"Many of the most important pitfalls are the ones that come from within ourselves and limit our interactions with the rest of the team players"

3. PERSONAL BAD COMMUNICATION

Some of us are bad at any or both of these:
- Inwards communication - learning more what we need to do
- Outwards communication - explaining what we found

Solution -

Communication is one of the most complex topics in testing (you can see our previous webinar).

This is something you need to MASTER if you want to be a good tester.

4. LACK OF REALISM

Avoid any of the 2 extremes:
- Optimism: everything will sort out by itself, no need to worry about things
- Pessimism: no matter what we do this project will fail, no need to worry about things

Solution -

Keep your cool. When you lose perspective walk it off until you can
approach the issue from the right and realistic angle.
Be the person who comes up with the solutions, not only the problems

"Many of the most important pitfalls are the ones that come from within ourselves and limit our interactions with the rest of the team players"

5. SHYNESS

Sometimes we feel like the most junior member of the project, assuming anything we see was already seen and dismissed by the "more experienced" guys.

Solution -

If you see or feel something is not right make sure to bring this up. If it is just a feeling look for a person who may help you to concretize this to something tangible.

Many times it takes fresh eyes to see the Elephant in the Room.

CONCLUSION

Many times we are our own worst enemies...

The best way to fight testing pitfalls is to be aware of them, and to have peers to helps us visualize them as they happen.

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